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# EDITORIAL

Our first article in this issue is based upon Professor Keller's address to the Annual General Meeting on May 29th, 1963. Professor R. E. Keller is Henry Simon Professor of German Language and Medieval German Literature in the University of Manchester, and author of a standard work on German dialects. His conclusions will undoubtedly be of great interest to students of our English dialects.

Dr. Wright's article on the terminology of the rapidly dying breed of small trading and fishing sailing vessels preserves valuable linguistic data for the future. Dr. Peter Wright is Senior Lecturer in English at the City Training College, 44 Collegiate Crescent, Sheffield, 10, and those who may wish to respond to his request for fishing terms are asked to write to him there. Members will be interested to know that Dr. Wright was the first of the field-workers whose patient and skilful labours produced the material on which the great Orton-Dieth *Survey of English Dialects* is based. The first two volumes of this survey were reviewed in the Journal last year and the third is reviewed in the current issue.

A major contribution to the study of dialects in this country was the publication at the end of October of Professor Brook's book on *English Dialects*, regional, class and occupational, which is reviewed in this issue. All who know the part played by Professor Brook in the founding and running of the Society will find considerable satisfaction in his authorship of this comprehensive work.

The Society's first meeting in 1963 was held in the University of Manchester, on 20th February. Mr. J. Cassidy provided a sparkling evening's entertainment with his rich store of humorous anecdotes in a talk entitled "Dialect in Everyday Life". The Annual General Meeting was held on the premises of the Literary and Philosophical Society, with Sir Harold Parkinson in the chair. At the meeting on 13th November members of the Edwin Waugh Society once again delighted members with a "Dialect Evening" at the University of Manchester, displaying through the number of their speakers both their versatility and their enthusiasm for diaiect poems and stories, traditional and new-minted.

On a lovely day in June a number of members accepted the kind invitation of Sir Harold and Lady Parkinson to take tea at Hornby Castle and to see their beautiful home and gardens. Those who were present remember with great pleasure a delightful afternoon in the heart of the Lancashire countryside.

# THE USE and ABUSE of DIALECT SURVEYS: The German Example

by R. E. KELLER

Last year an event occurred which gave great satisfaction both to dialect lovers and to students of linguistics. I am referring to the publication of the first two volumes of the English Dialect Survey. It is therefore fitting that we should ask ourselves at this stage: what is a dialect survey for? What does it do? What can it do?

In contrast to any other sort of linguistic study, e.g. dialect grammars, monographs, dictionaries, its main characteristic is that it rests on a geographical basis. It records place for place certain linguistic facts. Its spatial dimension is its chief characteristic, whether it is presented in the form of lists or in the form of maps. The English Dialect Survey has started with lists, but it will later have an atlas section as well. Most existing dialect geographical surveys were published in the form of maps, such as the *Linguistic Atlas of France* (1903-1910), the *Linguistic Atlas of Italy and Southern Switzerland* (1928-40), and the *German Linguistic Atlas* (1926-56), to mention but a few European ones. The *Linguistic Atlas of German-speaking Switzerland* (1962- ) contains both maps and, to a minor extent, if the editors thought it necessary, supplementary lists. But whether in the form of maps or lists, what these works offer is primarily raw material. The reader and research worker may use it as they see fit. This solid basis in fact is the great merit of these works. The need to use them, to interpret the facts, is what makes them fascinating tools, but also dangerous tools. There is many a trap for the unwary reader and many a temptation for the student with an academic axe to grind. Speculation is invited. It may stimulate further research and eventually lead to unexpected insights into the problems, to understanding and perhaps even solutions. But if conjecture is prematurely given the appearance of dogmatic orthodoxy it is liable to obscure the problems and to frustrate true understanding. In this paper I shall try to look at the half century or so of interpretation of the German dialect survey, to point to some of the uses and abuses which have emerged. I do not want, of course, to suggest that the future interpreters of the English Dialect Survey will ever be led astray in a similar fashion. Some of the positive insights, however, are likely to be the same, some others will probably be different because the particular German circumstances do not apply.

First it is necessary to say a word or two about the characteristics of the German undertaking. When I said just now that all dialect surveys present raw material this is to some extent not true of the German Linguistic Atlas, or at any rate less true than of the

other works I have mentioned. The German survey of all large undertakings alone is based on the so-called Indirect Method. The English survey, like the French, the Italian and the Swiss, is based on the Direct Method. In the direct method phonetically and linguistically trained fieldworkers, as few as possible, are given the task of asking a fixed number of linguistic questions directly of reliable informants in chosen localities. The questionnaire is usually very detailed. It is carefully assembled with the aim of eliciting the most interesting and instructive phonological, morphological, syntactical and lexical material. Anybody who has seen the questionnaire of the English Survey will have noticed the detailed nature of the enquiry. The English questionnaire comprises 1322 questions. The French survey, recorded by one fieldworker between 1896-1900, contained nearly 2,000 questions. The Linguistic Atlas of Italy and Southern Switzerland is based on the recordings of three fieldworkers, made between 1919-27, and on a questionnaire of about 2000 items. The Dialect Survey of German-speaking Switzerland employed three main fieldworkers who worked with a questionnaire of over 2500 questions from 1940-58. The network of localities where a recording was made is very similar for the three great national undertakings: 639 localities in France, 405 in Italy and Southern Switzerland, 311 in England, which means a density of about 2 - 4%. In German-speaking Switzerland recordings were made in 573 localities, which means a density of about 33%. To sum up — a dialect survey based on the direct method has the following characteristics: few, highly trained fieldworkers, an *enquête* carried out with a large detailed questionnaire in the space of a few years (4-16) at a few hundred carefully chosen, representative localities. The elicited material is noted down phonetically and published in phonetic transcription in atlas or list form with careful indication of each locality and information on each informant. It is scientific raw material in the best sense of the word.

The German Dialect Atlas (DSA) is based on the indirect method. It grew over a period of 55 years, 1880-1935, and took a further 21 years for publication. It consists of answers sent in by the village schoolmasters of over 40,000 localities. These answers are translations of 40 sentences in standard German into the local dialects, written by laymen in ordinary alphabetic script. Something like 16,000 hand-drawn maps exist. The published atlas comprises 129 maps of various scales and geographical extent. They cannot, of course, indicate the local forms for over 40,000 places. The maps are, one might almost say, doctored; the material is trimmed and interpreted before publication. The small questionnaire was designed to elicit mainly phonological material. It yields little information on morphological, syntactical or lexical problems. An additional *German Word Atlas* was later compiled by the same

method and is now appearing (vols. I-X, 1951ff). The DSA is phonetically crude. In its defence it is generally stated that the inevitable mistakes made by the lay collaborators cancel each other out, that a network density of 100% as against one of 2%—4% is an advantage balancing the disadvantage of lay transcription. Spot-checks by experts have shown that the maps, though crude in notation, large scale and of little use with regard to any individual locality or nicety of pronunciation, are nevertheless remarkably accurate. Because of their neglecting the fine, minute details of linguistic reality, because they obscure the infinite complexity of speech, these maps encourage wide, sweeping statements. By simplifying they invite generalisations.

But what are the concrete achievements? What are the conclusions the German Dialect Survey has led to? I think we can distinguish between (1) *Basic Results* which concern the relationship between language and geography, and (2) *Specific Results* which concern the growth and evolution of the German language in its dialectal manifestations.

First, the *basic results*. If we look at a map[1] like the one illustrating the Germanic sound-group *-hs*—in the standard German words *sechs, Ochsen, wachsen* (English *six, oxen, wax*) as found in the Rhenish dialects we are struck at once by the wide divergence. It is true in the north, north of Düsseldorf, we find one uniform reflex *-ss-* (*sess, ossen, wassen*) and in the south, near Mainz for instance, we have again only one reflex, *-chs-* (*sechs, Ochsen, wachsen*). But in a very wide belt in between we discover that the same historical sound-group is represented by divergent forms. Cologne district for instance says *sechs*, but *Ossen* and *wassen*, while the Moselle valley has *sechs, Ochsen* but *wassen*. There is even a dialect enclave south of the Moselle which has the distribution of the Cologne area. From such pictures—the French atlas had produced the same findings—it was first concluded that the old statement of philology that sound-laws admit of no exceptions, was simply not true, and that every word had its own special history.[2] For every other phenomenon we get in principle the same sort of distributive pattern. So we find that our linguistic landscape is criss-crossed in a fantastic way. Especially Romance dialectologists, and many German ones followed them, concluded that dialect geography showed that there were no dialects, that

(1) To be found e.g. in Th. Frings, *Grundlegung einer Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache*, 3rd. ed., Halle, 1957; *Sprache und Geschichte*, I, Halle, 1956.

(2) Cf. K. Jaberg, *Sprachgeographie*, Aarau, 1908, p.6: "Das Lautgesetz, das da sagt, dass ein gewisser (lateinischer) Laut unter gewissen Bedingungen an einem bestimmten Orte sich gleichbleibt oder sich zu einem bestimmten neuen Laut entwickelt, ist eine Abstraktion. In Wirklichkeit hat jedes Wort seine besondere Geschichte."

there was complete fragmentation and that there were no dialect boundaries.[3]

It is true it is found that one form of speech shades off almost imperceptibly into another form. In the German linguistic area there is probably not a village or even a hamlet which is not in some way linguistically differentiated from its neighbours. It has been shown that even within a small isolated village there is no linguistic uniformity. There are differences between the generations, the sexes and individual families in the smallest isolated speech community. But we have neverthless to distinguish between areas where isoglosses accumulate and others where they are relatively scarce, though never absent. Furthermore it can be shown that where we have so-called fascicles or belts of isoglosses, the most salient, the most noticeable linguistic differences occur. We must therefore distinguish between various types of linguistic areas. There are large homogeneous areas, such as the area round Cologne where every Germanic *u* in words like English *house, mouse, out, brown* has as its modern reflex a long *u* (*hus, mus* etc.) and other large homogeneous areas where every Germanic long *u* has become *au* (*Haus, aus*). Such areas are called cores. In between we tend to get divergent development. This is a transition zone. In some areas a sound development may take place spontaneously. Such a compact dialect territory or core area is an area where the sound-law will admit of no exceptions. But the outer boundaries, the dialect boundaries, are never sharp. They are transition zones, with belts of isoglosses. They have arisen because language is never static in space. Just as language changes continuously in time so it does in space. This is an important discovery of linguistic geography. Words migrate.

We know from our historical records that the pronunciation with long *u* (*oo*) in the English words *house, mouse, out,* etc. and in the corresponding German words is old, in fact goes back to Indo-European times and has an age of some 4000-5000 years. The pronunciation with *au* (*ou*) both in English and German, however, is more modern. In German documents spellings with *au* occur in Austria as early as the 12th-13th centuries and then spread gradually westwards and northwards. By 1500 it had become the accepted spelling of the rising standard language and was used also in those dialect areas where long *u* (*oo*) is preserved in speech. Whether the spread which is observable in the documents also occurred in the spoken language or whether long *u* changed independently and spontaneously to *au* everywhere where long *u* is no longer current, is a moot point. Some movement in the spoken language there undoubtedly was. Thus we can distinguish active

(3) Cf. Gaston Paris: "Il n'y a pas de dialects, les parlers se perdent les uns dans les autres". L. Gauchat, "Gibt es Mundartgrenzen?" *Archiv. f. d. Stud. d. neuern Sprachen u. Lit.*, lvii (iii), 1903, pp. 365ff.

and passive areas. We can discern thrusts or wedges of the victorious forms. The present-day maps often allow us to reconstruct former linguistic areas now broken up by a thrust.

The map[4] which shows the northern dialectal *us* against southern dialectal *uns* (English *us*) along the Middle Rhine exemplifies a thrust very clearly. The southern form *uns* (English *us*), which is also standard German, is gaining ground against the northern form. Having found that words migrate, we may ask ourselves why they do so. The boundaries are not accidental. Are they dictated by nature? Only insofar as nature helps or prevents human contact. The river Rhine carries an enormous amount of traffic; the roads run alongside it because the mountainous districts on both banks are difficult to traverse. We find in fact that the German rivers Rhine and Danube are never dialect boundaries but that all isoglosses run across them. Where a river is a boundary such as the river Lech, a southern tributary of the Danube, we find it is also an age-old political boundary. It is the boundary between the Swabians and the Bavarians of tribal times, later between the Duchies of Swabia and Bavaria and in late medieval times and down to the French Revolution between the principality of Bavaria and various Swabian prinicipalities. This river was thus a political boundary for some 1300 years. Nature by itself is rarely responsible for dialect boundaries. Where geographical obstacles have led to dialect boundaries it is because political and economic boundaries coincided with the natural ones. The Romance scholar L. Gauchat stated: history is stronger than nature, and he pointed out that the Montblanc range, i.e. the highest peak in the Alps, is no linguistic boundary; Valais, Savoy and the Valle d'Aosta all speak nearly the same Franco-Provençal. Further east the Alps link rather than separate German dialects. It is only where nature actually prevents communication that dialect boundaries arise. There are also reasons inherent in each individual word. The advancing word has qualities which aid its success; and the retreating word has qualities which diminish its resistance; the successfully resisting word has qualities which enable its survival. We saw how *sechs* had advanced far north against *sess*, while *wachsen* had made much less progress against *wassen*. A numeral like '*six*' is a market word with much greater expansive force than a domestic word like *wachsen* 'to grow'.

The dialect word for 'church gallery' is *Duxal* in widely scattered relic areas in the western Rhineland.[5] It is quite plainly in full retreat before the word of the standard language (*Empore*). Its scattered occurrences enable us to reconstruct its earlier distribution. Some survival areas are to be accounted for by their remoteness. Relics always occur along the peripheries. This is

(4) See Adolf Bach, *Deutsche Mundartforschung*, 2nd ed. Heidelberg, 1950.
(5) A. Bach, *op. cit.*

A hundred years ago, just before the birth of dialect geography in Germany, it was generally believed that the present-day dialects were the dialects of the ancient tribes of the time of the Age of Migrations. The modern dialects were seen as the languages of the ancient Franks, Frisians, Saxons, Thuringians, Bavarians and Alemannians, the 4th-8th century Germanic tribes who had over the centuries fused and become the German nation. This view was completely shattered by the early dialect geographers. In 1900 Karl Haag published his famous 'Seven Theses on Dialect Movements'.[6] It is theses 6 and 7 which have had the most profound influence on subsequent thinking and which have dominated the discussion of German dialect questions ever since. No. (6) stated: Old political boundaries which are no longer valid do not hold up linguistic movement for more than three hundred years; the effect of new boundaries begins to show distinctly after 30-40 years. And (7) runs: Medieval tribal boundaries have nothing to do with our modern dialects; modern linguistic areas largely coincide with the political territories (principalities etc.) of the last three centuries. This amounts to a complete refutation of the tribal theory and to the assertion that the German dialect boundaries of to-day reflect mainly the political map of late-medieval Germany up to the French Revolution.

The Rhenish school of dialectologists which flourished in the twenties and thirties embraced this theory whole-heartedly and elaborated it under the leadership of Theodor Frings[7]. He tried to demonstrate that the dialect map of the Rhineland is a reflection of the political map of before the French Revolution. In the north we have the territory of the Archbishop-Elector of Cologne, in the centre that of the Archbishop-Elector of Trier, and in the south that of the Archbishop-Elector of Mainz and of the Count Palatine of the Rhine. Each of these relatively large principalities groups round itself a series of minor principalities. The main dialect boundaries are stated categorically and dogmatically to coincide with these political boundaries.

Critics have pointed out the discrepancy in the course of the political and dialectal boundaries. The advocates of the theory have often used the term 'cultural area' where the 'late medieval state' did not seem to coincide closely enough with the dialectal boundaries. Thus although one given form may not be found in the whole former state of Cologne on the one hand and may be found in large areas outside it on the other hand, the notion of the 'cultural area' of the old Cologne Electorate is believed to explain the dialect boundary.

(6) *Zeitschrift für hochdeutsche Mundarten*, i, 1900, 138f.

(7) For further details see K. C. King, "The Study of Dialect in Germany", *Journal of the Lancashire Dialect Society*, 4, 1954.

Opponents of the theory have pointed out that even in prehistoric archeological finds a tripartition of the Rhinelands into the Cologne, Trier, Mainz regions is clearly recognizable and that the morphology of the area itself is primarily responsible for the dialectal divisions and that these have nothing to do with the political map of before the French Revolution, except in so far as that political map itself reflected the morphology of the area. This reaction is undoubtedly healthy. In the twenties and thirties, the theory was regarded as revealed truth, and woe-betide the student of German who was not able to repeat the dogmatic statements of the great leaders.

Perhaps the most far-reaching and profound consequences which dialect geography had for German linguistic history concerned the views on the so-called High German Sound Shift. High German, that is the Germanic tongue spoken in the southern, higher-lying half of Germany, alone among all Germanic languages, underwent an important change in its inherited consonants *p, t, k*. While these consonants remained unchanged in English and Dutch for instance, they became *f* or *pf*, *s* or *ts* and *ch* (as in Scottish *loch*) in High German. Thus for English *pan, sheep* High German has *Pfanne, Schaf*, for English *hate, tin*, High German has *Hass, Zinn* and for English *make* German has *machen*. If the sound-law is stated in sufficient detail it is valid without exception for High German. The maps produced after the dialect survey had been made show a very interesting picture indeed. North of a line running from about Düsseldorf to Kassel we find only unshifted consonants, i.e., *p, t, k* as in English. South of a line crossing the Rhine valley near Speyer we find only shifted consonants. In between we have a divergent development. Thus Mainz and the Palatinate say *Appel, Pund* for Southern German *Apfel, Pfund* (apple, pound) but *das, machen, Dorf* etc. (that, make, thorp). Trier says *Appel, Pund, dat* but *Dorf* and *machen*, while Cologne has *Appel, Pund, dat* and *Dorp* but still *machen*. Thus we have a complete sound-shift in the south, complete absence of the sound-shift in the north and divergent development in between. It will come as no surprise that the dialect geographers see the Rhenish Fan as the result of a linguistic thrust coming from the south and advancing down the Rhine. Theodor Frings stated that this fan was the result of the graded or staggered advance of the features of the High German consonantal shift. This shift occurred, according to him and many others, spontaneously in the Upper German dialects and then spread northwards into the Central German or Franconian dialect. Frings[8] even produced a chronology for this huge south-north movement. Thus the Franks are believed to have held the *Apfel/Appel* line since about 800 A.D., while the present *machen/maken* line was reached in 1300. This chronology is based

(8) *Grundlegung*, p. 88.

on fairly weak evidence of scant place-names. Most of the old documents, even the oldest, show more or less the present distribution of dialect features. It is now fairly clear that the shift of *p, t, k* between vowels in Franconian is older than the oldest records from 800. Differences there are indeed in the extent of the sound-shift between the South and Central German dialects, but it now appears that it is more likely that these differences are ancient, that they go back to the time of the sound-shift and that they are not to any great extent the result of a gigantic linguistic movement. Again one must repeat that one should not lightly draw conclusions about linguistic history from present-day dialect maps without definite supporting historical evidence.

The reaction to the Rhenish hypothesis was extremely violent when it came some thirty years later. The wedge or fan-shaped isoglosses in western Central German were now declared to be not the passive transition zone between an advancing southern thrust and northern retreat but the result of a west-east expansion. The Luxemburg dialectologist Robert Bruch[9] propounded the theory of the Merovingian-Carolingian west-east expansion of Franconian and supported it with a large number of linguistic maps. Again, however, we have no historical evidence for such a linguistic expansion. If the theory of the late medieval principality as a dialect-forming unit is toppled from its lofty pedestal of dogmatic orthodoxy we should not replace it by something even more mythical, such as the role of the Carolingian domination. But it is surely right to recognize that dialect boundaries, or even better, dialect differences or dialect contrasts, may well reflect very old linguistic differences such as those between Franks and Alemannians. It has been pointed out that several important dialect boundaries run across former principalities rather than follow their frontiers. The boundary between Low German and High German throughout central Germany runs across former principalities. Professor Mitzka and others have pointed to the Saxons as the speakers of Low German and the Hessian Franks as speakers of High German. In other words they believe in the tribal origin, not so much of the boundary itself as of the contrast of linguistic types. The boundary itself is largely the result of settlements and clearings in the post-tribal medieval centuries.

One of the basic corollaries of the belief in the importance of the German states of the 15th-18th centuries is the belief in the relatively recent age of dialect boundaries. It has been stated that practically no features which now distinguish dialects, say Bavarian from Alemannic, go back to the early Middle Ages. Yet it is surely difficult to envisage the large uniform dialect areas which would then have to be accepted. If it is true that none of the

(9) Robert Bruch, *Grundlegung einer Geschichte des Luxemburgischen*, 1953; *Das Luxemburgische im westfränkischen Kreis*, 1954.

dialect features of to-day are present in our early medieval documents, and that the documents show relatively few differences anyway, it does not follow that we have to assume uniform speech from say Vienna to Strasbourg. This simply runs counter to everything we know about the lack of linguistic uniformity. If dialects are the result of the political map of the last few hundred years how are we to understand the fact that one of the most incisive German dialect boundaries, the Arlberg boundary, separates the two Austrian provinces of Tyril and Vorarlberg? Vorarlberg has formed part of the County of Tyrol since the middle of the 14th century and has belonged to the Habsburg dominions, i.e. Austria, uninterruptedly for the last six hundred years. The Arlberg pass is no geographical barrier. Yet the dialect of Vorarlberg is closely related to Swiss German, not to Austrian Tyrolese. The reason for this linguistic division on the Arlberg can surely only lie in the fact that Vorarlberg was settled by Alemannians in contrast to the rest of Austria which was colonized by the Bavarians. There seems to be no other reason why Vorarlberg should not speak Austro-Bavarian.

The boldest piece of interpretation ever committed by a German dialect geographer appeared in 1924 and was by the then director of the German dialect survey himself, Ferdinand Wrede.[10] —A number of maps showed a strong coincidence between the north and the south-west. For instance, while standard German and most High German dialects say *fünf* for *five*, the whole north and the south-west have forms without *n*. English, of course, also has no *n* in these words like *five, us, goose* (*fünf, uns, Gans*). Hypnotised by these maps, Wrede concluded that the north and the south-west were once linked, and that these forms represent former West Germanic, which was then torn asunder by a linguistic thrust from the south-east. That exactly the most conservative part of the south-west does not agree in all points might have served as a warning. The question of age had been left out of account. The loss of the nasal for instance occurred many centuries later in the Alemannic dialect than in the North-Sea Germanic dialects. There is no connection between these two features. The same applies to all the other superficial similarities. One must not draw conclusions from present-day maps without historical evidence. There is no historical evidence at all that German is a 'Gothicized West-Germanic' which broke up wedge-like the former West Germanic unity, which Wrede believed he could still see on some dialect maps. Wrede's theory, erroneous though it is, stimulated research and discussion for a generation.

German dialect geography has always looked to extra-linguistic circumstances for explanations. During half a century of discus-

(10) "Ingwäonisch und Deutsch", *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mundarten*, xix, 1924.

sion it has become more and more history and less and less linguistics. This is perhaps principally the result of the particular nature of the German dialect survey, based on the indirect method. But it is also the result of the development and state of linguistic studies in the German-speaking countries. German philology was so impressive and successful a science in the 19th century that it failed to notice the advent of the 20th with its new emphasis on language as a system. One of the leading German philologists had taught: linguistics is linguistic history. The historical approach has dominated German linguistics to the present day. Yet, it should always be the first task of the linguist to look for explanations in his own medium, in language itself. Perhaps just one example can make this clear. In the transition from medieval to modern German the old long vowels *i* and *u* in words like English *white* and *brown*, German *weiss* and *braun*, medieval German *wîz* and *brûn*, changed to the diphthongs *ei* and *au* in most, but not all areas. The isogloss which separates the modern dialectal long *i* and *u* from *ei*, *au* is intriguing. Dialect geography has always seen the change as a linguistic movement from east to north-west and has seen the present course of the isogloss as the line where historical factors, the resistance of political units, late-medieval states, arrested the advancing wave. Yet if we study the development of the language we find a better reason. In the vital and exposed sector of the isogloss, in northern Alsace, diphthongisation did not take place because the linguistic conditions had altered. Most of the long vowels had become short. It is because of this linguistic development that the diphthongisation did not take place, not because of the resistance of this or that petty principality.[11]

Dialect geography looking for explanations in history was probably bound to go astray unless it kept its twin pillars, dialect and history, always equally firmly at the centre of its picture. Where it has done this the results have been fruitful and far-reaching. This is perhaps one lesson to be learnt from German dialect geography. The other is that the link with history must not be allowed to lead to neglect of the search for explanations in language itself. In many ways this is much clearer now than when German dialect geography started over half a century ago.

(11) See R. E. Keller, "Die Bewahrung der alten Hochzungenlängen im Niederalemannischen", *Zeitschrift für Mundartforschung*, xxix, 1962.

# TH' OWL-LEET

When th' wark's ow done at th' end o' th' day
Up on tu t' moors aw wend my way
An' ceawer mi deawn t' world tu survey
Till th' owl-leet comes.

Th' merry babble of an owd wild rill
As grond as any warbler's trill
Seawnds even sweeter when ow is still
As th' owl-leet comes.

A rabbit le'ves its secret lair
An' fragrance wafts on th' evenin' air
Shy fleawrs just fold their petals in prayer
As th' owl-leet comes.

Aw watch long shadows come an' pass
A gentle wynt breathes thro' th' long grass
A tonic tu th' lungs, beyond power o' brass
As th' owl-leet comes.

Th' owd haymaker gilds Knowle Hill's crest
An' then drops silent into t' west,
A seet for ow, wi ee-seet blest
As th' owl-leet comes.

Bulljoan's aw yer deawn there bi t' swamp
A dog barks as it has a romp
Aw stirr misel, aw'm gettin' t' cramp
As th' owl-leet comes.

Th' witchin' heawr ov eve as come
In praise of it, mi speech's dumb
Ow nature rests, its day's wark done,
For th' owl-leet's come.

Neet leets her stars up one bi one
It's time as aw were gettin on,
There's nowt tu do but pike off whoam,
Now th' owl-leet's gone.

HARVEY KERSHAW

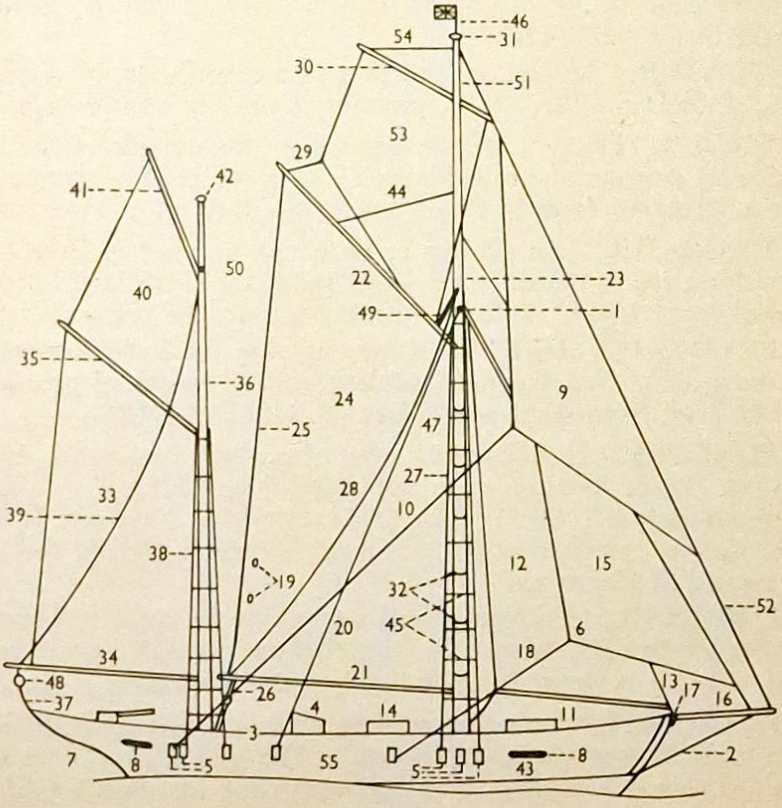
# LANGUAGE IN THE FISHING-SMACK

## By P. Wright

With the development of ships powered by coal, diesel-oil and now even atomic energy, there seems an urgent need to record for posterity the old expressions from the time of the early fishing-smacks before they finally disappear. For instance, as long ago as 1860, there were 32 smacks fishing from Fleetwood, but now, because of the development of deep-sea trawling, the discovery of fishing-grounds farther afield, the improvement of other ports and changing trade conditions, hardly one is left there to-day. Thus I have been fortunate in collecting the terms below from native members of the Fleetwood fishing community like my father, who served their apprenticeships in fishing-smacks.

My etymological information comes mainly from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and Joseph Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* has also been consulted for meanings and localisations. These reference works are cited below as OED and EDD respectively. The abbreviations are those usual in etymological dictionaries, and quotations, when given, are the first found in the OED under the particular meanings of the words concerned.

THE MAIN PARTS OF A FISHING-SMACK



1. ARMS OF THE RIGGING, "The parts of the yard extending on either side of the mast". From *arm*, sb[1], 8a, from OE *earm*, OED; + *rigging*, sb[2], 2, first rec 1594, probably from ON *rigga* "to wrap round", OED.

2. BOBSTAY, "Rope used to confine the bowsprit of a vessel downward to the stem". First rec 1758, of *bobstay;* from *bob*, etym unknown, + *stay*, sb[1], from OE *stæg*, OED.

3. BULWARK, "Raised parapet running round a ship's deck". First rec 1804, cf OED *bulwark*, sb, 3. Prob. from Du *bolverk*.

4 CABIN. First rec 1382, cf OED *cabin*, 5, from OF *cabane*. Since the ropes and sails of a sailing-smack were stored in the forecastle (See no. 11), all its crew had to live in the cabin. But in larger vessels, such as the three-masted, full-rigged cargo ships which brought timber and grain into Fleetwood Dock in the 1890s, the crew lived forward in the forecastle.

5. CHANNEL-PLATE, "Iron plate below the bulwark on the outside of a ship, to which the rigging is secured". First rec 1769, cf OED *channel*, sb[2]. A corruption of *chain-wale*, from OF *chaeine* + OE *walu* "stripe, bar"; + *plate*, sb, from OF *plate*, ultimately from Gk *platus* "flat".

6. CLEW, "Aftermost corner of a fore-and-aft sail". First rec 1627, cf *clew* sb[1], 7, from OE *cliwen* "ball of thread; anything shaped like a ball", OED.

7. COUNTER, "Arched, curved part of a vessel's stern". First rec 1626, cf OED *counter*, sb[4], 4, probably from Lat *contra* "against".

8. FENDER, "Piece of timber fastened to the outside of the hull, to prevent damage due to collision". First rec 1626, cf *fender*, 2b, from a shortened form of OF *defendre* "to ward off"; + *-er*, OED.

9. FLYING-JIB, "Sail similar in shape to, and set in front of, a jib". First rec in the quot for 1750 under OED *jib*, sb[1]. First el is from Angl *flegan* "to fly". For *jib*, see no. 15 below.

10. FLYING-JIB SHEETS, "Ropes holding the lower corners of the flying-jib". Not rec, but doubtless from *flying-jib*, cf prec item; + *sheet*, sb[2], from Angl *scet* "piece of cloth", cf OED.

11. FORECASTLE, "Forward part of a ship, under the deck". First rec 1840, *forecastle*, 3, from OE *fore* "before" + LOE *castel* "stronghold", OED. The OED states that *forecastle* is also, after sailors' pronunciation, written *fo'c'sle*, which is the type represented at Fleetwood.

12. FORE-SAIL, "Triangular sail set before the mast". First rec 1481-90, cf *foresail*, from OE *fore* "before" + OE *segel* "sail", OED. Cf Ger *vorsegel* "principal sail on the foremast".

13. FORE-STAY, "Strong supporting rope reaching from the head of the mainmast to the bowsprit end". First rec 1373, cf *fore-stay*, from OE *fore* + OE *stæg* "rope for supporting the mast", OED.

14. HATCH, "Wooden framework covering the openings in the deck". First rec 1530, cf *hatch*, sb[1], 3, from OE *hæc* "grating", OED.

15. JIB, "Triangular sail extending from the jib-boom to the head of the mainmast". First rec 1661, cf OED *jib*, sb[2]. Possibly an abbreviation of OF *gibet*, referring to the suspension of the jib from the mast-head. J. Corbett (*Successors of Drake*, written in 1909) considers it remarkable that no Tudor ship carried a foresail or jib, although they were used by small craft at the end of the 16th c. Large ships, however, with their enormous mainsails and topsails, had no great need of jibs.

16. JIB-BOOM, "Spar used to prolong the bowsprit". First rec 1748, cf OED *jib-boom*. From *jib*, cf No. 15; + *boom*, sb, from Du *boom* "tree, pole".

17. JIB-BOOM RING, "Iron ring for fastening the jib to the jib-boom". Not rec, but evidently from *jib-boom*, cf no. 16; + *ring*, sb, from OE *hring*, OED.

18. JIB-SHEETS, "Ropes by which the jib is trimmed". First rec 1825, cf OED *jib*, sb[1], 3. Probably from OF *gibet* "gallows" + Angl *scet* "piece of cloth".

19. LEECH REEF-CRINGLE, "Ring in the lower, rear corner of a sail, used for the attachment of a rope to fold the sail". Not rec, though *reef-cringle* itself is first rec 1841, cf OED *reef*, sb[1], 3. Prob from Du *lijk* "bolt-rope" + ON *rif* + Du *Kringel* "a ring".

20. MAIN BACKSTAY, "Long rope extending from the channel-plates to the head of the mainmast, which it supports". First rec 1626, cf OED *backstay*, prob from ON *meginn* "strong" + OE *bæc* + OE *stæg* "rope for supporting a mast".

21. MAIN-BOOM, "Spar for supporting the bottom of the main-sail". First rec 1769, cf OED *main*, adj, 10. From ON *meginn* + Du *boom* "tree, pole".

22. MAIN-GAFF, "Spar used to extend the top of the mainsail". Not rec 2nd el *gaff*, sb[1], 2, from OF *gaffe* "boat-hook", OED.

23. MAINMAST, "Principal mast of a vessel". First rec 15th c, cf OED *mainmast* 2nd el OE *mæst*.

24. MAINSAIL, "Sail set on the after part of the mainmast". First rec 1485, cf OED *mainsail*, 2nd el OE *segel*.

25. MAINSAIL-LEECH, "Sloping side of the mainsail". Not rec, but evidently from *mainsail*, cf No. 24, *leech*, sb[3], prob from Du *lijk* "bolt-rope"

26. MAIN-SHEET, "Rope which secures the mainsail when set". First rec 1485, cf *main-sheet* from ON *meginn* + Angl *scet* "piece of cloth", OED.

27. MAIN-SHROUD, "Set of ropes acting as lateral supports for the mainmast". First rec 1485, cf OED *main*, adj, 10. 2nd el OE *scrud* "a dress".

28. MAIN TOPPING-LIFT, "Each of a pair of lifts by which the main-topsail yard may be topped". The whole expression, which is not rec, is from *main*, adj. from ON *meginn*, OED, + *topping*, vbl sb[2], possibly from OE *topp*, + *-ing*, OED, + *lift*, sb[2], 7, from ON *lypta* "to raise", OED.

29. MAIN-TOPSAIL SHEET, "Rope which secures the main-topsail when set". First rec 1626, cf *main-topsail*, from ON *meginn* + OE *topp* + OE *segel* + Angl *scet* "piece of cloth".

30. MAIN-TOPSAIL YARD, "Yard for holding and extending the top of the main topsail". First rec 1626, cf OED *main-topsail*.

31. MAIN-TRUCK, "Wooden cap at the head of the mainmast". First rec 1861, cf OED *main*, adj, 10. From ON *meginn* "strong" + Lat *trochus* "iron hoop".

32. MAST-HOOP, "Iron hoop on a mast, to which a sail is attached". First rec 1867, cf OED *mast*, sb[1], 4b. From OE *mæst* + LOE *hop*.

33. MIZEN, "Fore-and-aft sail set on the after-side of the mizen-mast". First rec 1465, cf *mizen*, from Ital *mezzana* "sail on a ship's poop", OED.

34. MIZEN-BOOM, "Spar attached to the bottom of the mizen". First rec 1835, cf OED *mizen*, 3. From *mizen*, cf No. 33; + *boom*, sb, from Du *boom* "tree, pole".

35. MIZEN-GAFF, "Spar to extend the head of the mizen". Not rec, but from *mizen*, cf No. 33, + *gaff*, cf. No. 22.

36. MIZEN-MAST, "After mast of a two-masted vessel". First rec 1486, cf OED *mizen-mast*. 2nd el OE *mæst*.

37. MIZEN-SHEET, "Rope fastened to the lower corner of the mizen, used for shortening or extending it to the wind". First rec 1485, cf OED *mizen*, 3. From Ital *mezzana* + Ang *scet*.

38. MIZEN-SHROUD, "Set of ropes acting as lateral supports for the mizen-mast". First rec 1485, cf OED *mizen*, 3. 2nd el OE *scrud*, "dress, garment".

39. MIZEN TOPPING-LIFT, "Each of a pair of lifts by which the mizen-topsail yard may be topped". Not rec, but from *mizen*, cf No. 33, + *topping-lift*, cf. No. 28.

40. MIZEN-TOPSAIL, "Sail above the mizen". First rec 1626, cf *mizen-topsail*, from Ital *mezzana* + OE *topp* + OE *segel*, OED.

41 MIZEN-TOPSAIL YARD, "Yard for holding and extending the top of the mizen-topsail". First rec 1626, from *mizen-topsail*, cf prec item, + *yard*, sb[2], from OE *gerd* "rod yard", OED.

Only 2% of the names above are unrecorded. This would seem surprising because fishermen are not the most communicative of people in print; but it makes sense when one remembers that sailors would be well acquainted with the names of sails and parts of the ship because they were vital in navigation and life on board —indeed so vital that, unlike the many local names for moorings, line-fishing, net-making and harbour approaches, they seem to have been in general nautical use. Almost half the names (45%) are native words, 24% French, 10% each Scandinavian and Dutch, 7% Latin, and 1% each Italian and Low German. Although it would be unwise to read too much into these figures, they might be expected, with a good proportion of names originating from the fishing ports of Scandinavia and Holland.

The fact that none of the names has apparently been recorded before 1373 proves little, because fishing is our second oldest industry (after farming) and they must have existed in speech long before being written down.

Moreover, the compilers of the *Oxford English Dictionary* certainly could not expect their helpers to read everything then written. Fishing-smack terms form only a tiny part of a field which, though likely to provide many interesting words, has been relatively unexplored. I have therefore been making a trial questionnaire of fishing terms, and should be most gratified if any members of the Society cared to inform me of Lancashire or other words for particular fishing notions. There might be a fine catch!

## REVIEWS

G. L. BROOK. *English Dialects.* Andre Deutsch, London, 1963. 232 pp., 30s.

This work of major importance in the study of English dialects contains a wealth of information for specialist and general reader alike. There is perhaps more confusion and prejudice about the definition, scope and desirability of 'dialect' than about any other aspect of language. In his introductory chapter Professor Brook defines the term with precision, distinguishing carefully its use historically from its use about contemporary varieties of a language. He dissociates from dialect various kinds of sub-standard English often confused with it, and sets it up as a subject for dispassionate study, with the snobbish or sentimental attitudes which are often responsible for distorted views about dialect, shown for what they are.

The three chapters which follow comprise a succinct and comprehensive survey of the history of the regional dialects of England, employing the traditional division into Old, Middle and Modern English for convenience. As the author is careful to point out, however, there is no sharp break between them, but continuity in

the development of every dialect. The clarity of the description and the constant reference to present-day forms stimulate and hold the reader's interest in linguistic matters often regarded as esoteric, and passages from works in each of the principal dialects discussed bring these alive.

The wide range of different kinds of dialectal words and expressions cited will make the chapter on Modern English dialects of particular interest to many. Most readers who are familiar with a regional dialect will no doubt take the point of the account of the Worcestershire countryman who could not conceive that anyone could be unaware of the meaning of *oonty-toomps*! The sections on pronunciation, morphology and syntax provide the means for making many a fascinating comparison between Standard English and regional dialect words, both old and new.

The chapter on English Overseas reminds us of the extent to which English has become not only an international auxiliary language, but the first language of many sovereign states. In this setting Standard English itself takes its place as one dialect among many, including American English and those varieties spoken in various parts of the Commonwealth. Many influences foreign to us in these islands have shaped the development of English abroad, leading to modifications of the vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling and grammar, only a proportion of which have had any effect on British English.

A chapter on dialect research first recalls what has already been done to preserve information about our regional dialects and to investigate their characteristic features. There follows an account of the surveys and other research being done at the present time and of the way in which they are being carried out. The author gives us a most instructive insight into the requirements of a sound dialect survey and into the problems in the way of the realisation of these requirements.

For many people 'dialect' conjures up a regional form of speech, usually of a rural area, Cockney being the main exception; but there are many more dialects than these, for to the student of language the hitherto little-studied dialects of our industrial areas and great cities have their own features of interest, even if they lack the glamour of their rural counterparts. However, in addition to all the geographically distributed dialects, there are others whose distribution is different, namely the social and occupational dialects discussed by Professor Brook in the seventh chapter. The excitement which greeted Professor Ross's comments on U and non-U illustrates the keen interest, prejudice and snobbery which discussion of this type of dialects is liable to generate. Professor Brook's observations range widely, including not only dialectal variations between different social groups, but also between such

vocational stereotypes as the retired army officer and the clergyman; he goes on to amuse as well as enlighten us about the idiosyncrasies of professions such as the law, commerce, journalism, advertising and literary criticism, as well as various branches of industry.

The final chapter is on dialect and literature. Professor Brook shows how information gained from modern dialects can throw light on literature of the past, and he gives examples from the Old English poem *Beowulf* and the works of Chaucer and Shakespeare among others. There follows an account of some of the most outstanding dialect literature of the past few centuries, with particular reference to writers in the dialects of Lancashire and Yorkshire with whom so many members of the Society will be familiar.

A select bibliography and a word index set the seal on a work that is authoritative, lucid, precise and full of pungent observations on human behaviour as expressed by our linguistic diversity.

HAROLD ORTON and WILFRID J. HALLIDAY. *Survey of English Dialects.* (B) *The Basic Material,* Volume I The Six Northern Counties and the Isle of Man, Part II. E. J. Arnold and Son Ltd., Leeds, 1963. 400 pp., 90s.

The Introductory Volume and Volume I, Part I of the *Survey of English Dialects* were reviewed in the last issue of the Journal. Part II of the material for the north provides informants' responses to the questions in Books I to V of the Dieth-Orton Questionnaire.

The first three books of the questionnaire dealt largely with the farm and its implements; in Book IV we meet with the bird, animal, tree and plant names of the English countryside. The distribution and variety of dialect terminology is often surprisingly uneven. The *oak,* deeply embedded in our folk-lore, appears to have no other name in the North; nor has the *elm,* although the *elder* is rich in other names. There are variant pronunciations of *gate,* but only the one word; yet each of the different parts of a gate has several different names. Animals are frequently a rich source of nomenclature, yet there is no alternative to *mouse.* However, *reynard* recalls the fox of fable, and the graphic *mouldy-warp* ('earth-thrower', for a mole preserves common Anglo-Saxon meanings of two English words.

Similar surprises and delights await the reader in all three books, and the evidence is recorded with the same scrupulous care as in the earlier volumes. All who love the English language will await with interest and expectation the volumes which are to come.

will always put English scholars in the debt of this foremost champion of unconventional English of all kinds. One can relish the paradox that made him the editor of *A Dictionary of Clichés*—but then who could be fitter to seek out the platitudinous in our linguistic habits!

In *Origins* Mr. Partridge produced a major etymological English dictionary, first published five years ago and already in its third edition. It is in his chapter describing this undertaking that he sets forth the requirements of a lexicographer: an organising ability based upon general mental discipline and particular lexicographical training, together with sympathy and vision, "the former to empower him to understand the difficulties experienced by his consulters and readers, the latter to show him how best he can overcome those difficulties without impairing the systematic yet imaginative presentation of his material; material that is inevitably intractable, for it mirrors and expresses the thought and desires and achievements of mankind." In the last resort lexicography is an art because it deals with human beings, and this urbane addict is a successful practitioner because he is very much aware that he also is flesh and blood.

ALICE MILLER. *Poems.* Fleming and Hargreaves, Church, Lancashire, 1963. 3s. plus 6d. postage.

All who have read Mrs. Miller's poems in the pages of the Journal, as well as in many other papers and periodicals, will rejoice in this collection of poems which endorses her ability to portray "the clear colours of my greatly loved landscape"; it also contains character studies of those "whose destinies have touched the fringe of mine in the journeyings over the 'Brig o' Time'."

# PROGRAMME FOR 1964

As in past years, three meetings have been arranged for 1964. Unfortunately the demands upon the excellent accommodation of the Literary and Philosophical Society are so heavy that it has not been possible to arrange meetings there. An alternative meeting-place in the centre of Manchester has, however, been arranged for the Annual General Meeting.

The first meeting of the year, at which a "Dialect Miscellany" will be presented, will be held in the Arts Building of Manchester University at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, 5th February, 1964. It has been arranged for members to have dinner together in the University Refectory. Dinner (price 10/6) will be served at 6 p.m., and those who intend to be present are asked to inform the Secretary by January 27th.

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the Lecture Room of Gaddum House, 16-18 Queen Street, Manchester 2, at 7-30 p.m. on Wednesday, 27th May, 1964. After the official business of the meeting, Mr. D. J. Allerton, M.A., will speak on

"What makes dialects worth preserving?"

At the final meeting of the year, to be held in the Arts Building of the University at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, November 11th, 1964, it is hoped to repeat the success of recent years by holding a "Dialect Night" in co-operation with members of the Edwin Waugh Society.

# TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Leslie Procter relinquished the office of Treasurer of the Society on 31st December, 1962. We are deeply indebted to him for all that he has done for the Society, which has been unusually fortunate in having an accountant as its Treasurer.

As we all know to our cost, expenses of every kind are rising, and for some years the Society's expenditure has exceeded its income. It is necessary to keep a substantial credit balance to cover the Society's responsibilities to its Life Members. At the Annual General Meeting on 29th May, 1963, it was therefore decided that the annual subscription should be raised to ten shillings from 1st January, 1964, and that the Life Membership fee should be £10 10s. 0d.

Subscriptions are due on 1st January, and I should be grateful if members would send their subscriptions to me at the English Department, The University, Manchester, 13 as soon after that date as possible.

G. L. BROOK

# LANCASHIRE DIALECT SOCIETY

## Statement of Receipts and Payments for Year ending 31st December 1962

| RECEIPTS | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Subscriptions : | | | |
| Current and Arrears | 21 | 15 | 6 |
| Current Libraries | 4 | 17 | 6 |
| Life Members | 15 | 10 | 0 |
| Donations | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Sale of Journals | 1 | 18 | 0 |
| Building Society Interest | 2 | 16 | 3 |
| Balance 31st December, 1961 : | | | |
| Martins Bank Limited ..... 61 4 4 | | | |
| Bradford Equitable Building Society ..... 75 10 6 | | | |
| Cash in hand ..... 1 0 0 | | | |
| | 137 | 14 | 10 |
| | £189 | 12 | 1 |

| PAYMENTS | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Journals 1960 and 1961 | 88 | 5 | 0 |
| Postages and Stationery | 10 | 16 | 10 |
| Balance 31st December 1962 : | | | |
| Martins Bank Limited ..... 12 2 0 | | | |
| Bradford Equitable Building Society ..... 75 10 6 | | | |
| Bank Charges ..... 1 6 | | | |
| | 90 | 10 | 3 |
| | £189 | 12 | 1 |

*Note:* The Treasurer's expenses for 1962 have not been paid.

*Audited and found correct,*
S. ROBERTS
12th February, 1963
BS/HC

LESLIE PROCTER, *Treasurer*
Willow House, Waterfoot, Rossendale, Lancs.

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